

# Guide to Physical Activity in Schools

If a physically active lifestyle is adopted early in life, the chances are better that it may continue into adulthood. Schools can provide environments with opportunities for learning and practicing active lifestyle behaviors. According to the new 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, children and adolescents should engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity on most, preferably all, days of the week.

With increasing evidence that physical activity supports learning and in a time when physical education requirements are declining, school programs can promote physically active lifestyles for children and adolescents by incorporating activity in the school environment in the following ways:

- **Provide** time during the school day for quality physical activity.
  - **Sponsor** parent-child activity programs after school.
  - **Encourage** and enable school personnel to be active role models by their participation in physical activity.
  - **Allow** access to facilities before and after school hours and during vacation periods.
  - **Plan** fitness breaks: periodic 5 minute aerobic activities to break up the school day or class.
  - **Provide** students and teachers with physical and social environments that encourage and enable physical activity.
  - **Encourage** and enable parental involvement in physical activity.
  - **Schedule** an activity break after lunch.
  - **Provide** extracurricular programs, e.g. walking clubs, jumping rope, in-line skating.
  - **Encourage** teachers to provide time for unstructured physical activity during recess.
- **Provide** quality, accessible PE classes and physical activity opportunities for children with disabilities.
  - **Encourage** safe walking and biking to and from school.
  - **Provide** a listing of community physical activity resources to students and parents.
  - **Display** posters and banners with physical activity themes.
  - **Ask** the librarian to prepare a book display and list of books about various physical activities and sports.
  - **Send** home activity homework that parents and children can do together.
  - **Encourage** walk-to-school programs.
  - **Coordinate** physical activities with community agencies, allowing use of school facilities to facilitate training programs for volunteer youth coaches.
  - **Incorporate** physical activity in other subjects such as math, science, language arts, spelling and geography.



*For more information and to see guides on other topics, visit the Wisconsin section of the Action for Healthy Kids Website:*

[www.actionforhealthykids.org](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org)